Gifted and Talented HW Module 1. Catherine Walkear

Reading 1: Profiles of the Gifted and Talented (Betts and Niehart).

The authors propose a model of G&T that differentiates 6 different profiles based on behaviours, feelings and needs. The purpose of the model is threefold: to increase awareness among educators and parents of differences in gifted children, to provide guidelines in identifying gifted children and to develop appropriate goals for the gifted.

The 6 profiles are sumarised below:

I. The Successful: characterised by complacency, fear of failure, extrinsically motivated, approval seeking, risk-avoiding conformist. They do not have the necessary skills, concepts and attitudes necessary for life-long learning.

Type II The Creative: are highly creative, easily bored, with fluctuating self –esteem, who are impulsive, challenging teachers, and questioning rules and policies.

Type III The Underground: strong desire to belong socially, unsure of their rilght to their emotions, diminished sense of self, and ambivalent about achievement, reject challenges, not connected to the teacher or the class, and unsure of direction.

Type IV The At-Risk: Feel resentful and angry, depressed, can be reckless and manipulative, with poor self-concept, who create crises and cause disruptions, thrill seeking with low academic achievement.

Type V Twice Exceptional: who show learned helplessness, intense frustration and anger, and mood disorders, with poor academic self concept, may be good problem solvers, but may also be disruptive and off-task, behavior problems.

Type VI Autonomous Learner: Self-confident and self-accepting, hold incremental view of ability, optimistic, and intrinsically motivated, has appropriate social skills, and works independently, seeks challenges, strongly self-directed.

The matrix can be used as a tool for inservicing educators, but also as a teaching tool to expand students’ awareness and understanding of the meaning of giftedness and its effect on their learning and relationships.

Reading 2:

Gagne: DMGT

Gagne’s DMGT distinguishes between giftedness as ‘ the possession and use of outstanding natural abilities, called aptitudes, in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers.

Talent designates the outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities, called competencies (knowledge and skills), in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers who are or have been active in that field.

One can be gifted but not talented, however, you can’t be talented without being gifted!

Giftedness does not decrease (the potential stays the same) but performance can, giftedness is developmental (not static)

The G component of the DMGT clusters natural abilities into 6 sub-components. Four of them are mental: intellectual GI; creative GC, social GS, and perceptual GP. The last 2 are physical abilities: muscular GM, (large physical movements), and reflexes GR, (fine motor control).

Talents are divided into 9 subcomponents, 6 of them corresponding to work-related classification of personality types: Realistic; Investigative; Artistic; Social; Enterprising; and Conventional. Three additional subcomponents are academic (K-12), games and sports.

Talent development corresponds to the progressive transformation of gifts into talents. The three components of giftedness G, talent T and the talent development process make up the basic trio of components within the DMGT. Two additional components complete the structure: the intrapersonal catalysts (I) including the physical traits and personality traits. Personality traits include factors such as awareness, motivation, and volition, and environmental catalysts (E) which include a vast array of factors which need to come into confluence to allow maximum potential realization. These include

1. milieu (environmental influences)

2. economic issues, the influence of significant persons in the talentee’s life,

3. provision: availability of enrichment in its various forms.

Gagne then proposes that there is a hierarchy: G, I, D, E, within the 4 causal components, and finishes by saying that talent emergence results from a complex choreography between the four causal components that is unique to each individual.

Reading 3: Cultural Gifts in the 90’s and Beyond.

Dorbis and Vasilevska propose that if Australia is to benefit from the many cultures within its society, then the education systems need to overhaul their concepts, definitions and identification of cultural gifts and talents, and incorporate students from culturally diverse groups into support programs.

They quote research from both Australia and the US regarding the under-representation of minority cultures in G & T programs, and the over-representation of them in special education.

Reasons for this inequity are given as:

conceptions of gifted and talented

testing methods

curriculum

learning styles,

home languages,

stereotypes of different cultural groups and

historical influences.

The conceptions of gifted & talented influence testing methods, curriculum, programs and provisions, and arise because of the original concept of giftedness (and the influence of the work of Terman and Binet) as being what shows up on an IQ test as a score of 140+.

While a recent definition of giftedness includes reference to the inclusion of children and youth from all cultural groups, economic strata and areas of human endeavour, current research highlights the need to examine community perceptions of giftedness, in order to better identify students from the non dominant culture.

Interviews with the Lebanese Muslim community in Melbourne rated moral standards, obedience to the family and citizenship highly in addition to high levels of personal and social attributes. Identification of such students by their teachers would be unlikely as these qualities would be demonstrated outside the school setting.

In a 1991 study in Queensland, teacher nominated giftedness, based on academic excellence and school success (58% used this method) was likely to miss students from low socio-economic/ethnic minorities (not surprising if you know Queensland!)

Frasier proposed a model based on a wide range of ten indicators such as motivation, problem solving, reasoning etc, which was refined by Gibson for use in identifying gifted Aboriginal students, finding that the Aboriginal community rated communication, memory, motivation and inquiry most highly. Leadership, social ability and confidence/sensitivity were added to Frasier’s original indicators.

It is proposed that such a model should be tailored to a schools’ unique population and that community consultation is the key to successful cultural identification.

The study, however is now quite dated (published in 1996), and is also limited to Australian cases (ethnic minorities, and the Aboriginal community), so may have limited scope beyond Australia.

The paper concludes by saying that there must be consultation with the community in the provision for culturally gifted and talented. IQ tests, and teacher nomination and single criterion tests, while fast and efficient, are not good identifiers. A variety of ID techniques developed in consultation with the wider community is a more realistic and productive method of identifying G&T students.

Reading 4: Asynchrony: A new definition of giftedness.

Silverman proposes a new way of looking at giftedness, with reference to Hollingworth, and also Terman, who both noted that it is a set of complex psychological issues resulting from disparities between the child’s mental age and their chronological age, with their peer relations becoming more acute as their IQ increases.

‘Giftedness is defined as asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders the particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order to develop optimally.’

Asynchrony intensifies as IQ increases, and also with increased discrepancies between strengths and weaknesses. Twice-exceptional students are most asynchronous because they have the largest disparities in their development. They may be very strong visually-spatially, but have poor auditory-sequential ability. Underachievers are highly asynchronous, having large gaps between their strengths and weaknesses, or are twice-exceptional, experiencing learning/behavioural difficulties as well as giftedness.

The definition focuses on the vulnerability of the gifted child, and is useful in helping gain support for the gifted. The problems associated with the elitist view of gifted provision helping an already advantaged group are bypassed by adopting this view.